

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (CORK, &c. COUNTIES).

RETURN to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 22 March 1870 :—for,

RETURN " of the LUNATIC ASYLUMS and WORKHOUSES in the Counties of *Cork* and *Limerick*, in which TURKISH BATHS have been erected; stating to what extent such Baths are now in use: "

" And, COPY of the REPORTS made by the MEDICAL OFFICERS of these Institutions, respecting the Benefit or otherwise, derived from the use of such Baths."

— No. 1. —

RETURN FROM INSPECTORS OF LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

8 April 1870.

THE Inspectors, in accordance with this Order of the House of Commons, dated Tuesday, the 22nd March 1870, have the honour to transmit herewith the Returns specified. The Turkish bath being employed for general sanitary purposes in the two district asylums respectively of *Cork* and *Limerick*.

(signed) *John Nagart.*

T. H. Burke, Esq., &c. &c. &c.,
Under Secretary.

MEDICAL OFFICERS' REPORTS.

Gentlemen, District Lunatic Asylum, Cork, 8 April 1870.

In reply to your inquiry as to the efficacy of the Turkish bath, you are aware that it was in this asylum it was first used, in the treatment of insanity. On my recommendation, and on my application to the Board of Governors to have a suitable building erected for the purpose, which was willingly complied with, I am happy to state that the anticipations I formed have been fully realised.

At present, about 80 or 100 patients use the bath daily, except on Sundays; it is found to improve their condition both mentally and physically. According to my experience, the beneficial effects of the Turkish bath, in promotion of the general health, are more observable amongst the idiotic and epileptic classes, who are necessarily more confined than the other inmates, and therefore less capable of taking exercise; to these, by promoting the action of the skin, it, to a great extent, supplies the place of exercise in the open air, and is beneficial to all patients incapable of taking a moderate amount of exercise. As a remedial measure in the cure of insanity, it appears particularly efficacious. In cases of melancholia, dependent probably, on sluggish circulation of the blood in the brain; in puerperal mania, and in cases connected with catamenial irregularities, it is also useful. I have also seen great benefit from its use in scrofula and rheumatic affections. I do not consider it of any advantage in acute mania, and in such cases would rely more on the "hot-water bath," with cold effusions on the head. As a means of cleanliness, it is the most effectual and cheapest that can be adopted in a public establishment.

As a hygienic measure, I feel persuaded that it should form an integral portion of every public institution, such as gaols, prisons, and union workhouses, where many are assembled, and have only a limited amount of exercise.

I am, &c.

(signed) *THOMAS POWER, M.D., F.R.S.*

To the Inspectors General,
Office of Lunatic Asylums, Castle, Dublin.

Limerick District Lunatic Asylum,
8 April 1870.

THE Turkish bath now in use in this lunatic asylum, for the past seven years, has been in our judgment of the greatest benefit as a curative agent in acute mania; we have seen it exercise a most soothing effect in numerous very excited cases, and the cutaneous circulation has become much improved under its agency, thus aiding very considerably to restore a healthy state both of mind and body; we can with truth say it continues to produce the most favourable results, and in no case has its use proved of the slightest injury, and the patients seem always to enjoy the idea of going into it.

In various physical diseases as dyspepsia, cutaneous affections, rheumatism, and febrile attacks, it has proved most salutary, and in conclusion, we are of opinion that no insane hospital can be considered perfect, as regards its curative power, without the addition of such a powerful remedial agent as the Turkish bath.

(signed) *Robert FitzGerald, M.D.,*
Resident Superintendent.

Robert R. Gelston, M.D.,
Visiting and Consulting M.D.

The Inspectors General of
Lunatic Asylums.

— No. 2. —

RETURN FROM THE POOR LAW COMMISSIONERS.

I.—WORKHOUSES in which TURKISH BATHS have been erected.

Ferryoy.
Middleton.

II.—COPY OF REPORTS made by the MEDICAL OFFICERS of the WORKHOUSES of FERRYOY and MIDDLETON UNIONS respecting the benefit or otherwise derived from the use of the TURKISH BATHS in those Workhouses.

FERRYOY UNION.

MEDICAL OFFICERS' REPORTS on the subject of the TURKISH BATH.

2nd March 1862.—WITH reference to the subject of the Turkish bath, I beg to make a few remarks explanatory of its effects and practical utility.

The Turkish bath consists essentially of heated air applied to the surface of the body, the effect of which is at first an increase of the insensible perspiration, and gradually a softness and moisture of the skin; finally, a general and copious perspiration breaks out. After the continuance of which, for some time, the body is drenched plentifully with tepid, and lastly with cold water; the refreshing and invigorating effects produced by the latter steps of the process are best known to those who have personally experienced them.

The bath is thus a powerful and certain promoter of the functions of the skin, thoroughly opening its pores, and setting free from the system the various morbid and impure matters retained in the blood. It is also a thorough cleanser, and a tonic and bracer to the whole frame. It is a useful remedial agent in a large class of diseases where a determination to the surface, and free cutaneous transpiration are indicated. For example, in congestive and inflammatory states of the internal organs and viscera, the lungs, liver, and kidneys in particular, renal dropsy, Bright's disease, &c. &c. In virtue of its eliminative power, it has been successfully employed in the treatment of rheumatism, sciatism, and gout, and its tonic properties have been found valuable in scrofula and the early stages of pulmonary consumption. Its beneficial effects in the treatment of skin diseases are obvious. On the whole, I regard it as a valuable aid to medicine in the treatment of disease, not of universal, but of very extended applicability; and in this opinion I am borne out by every medical authority whom I have consulted. Besides its curative powers, its value as a prophylactic of disease, should not be underrated.

In conjunction with the master, I visited the Limerick Workhouse last week. The results of the employment of the bath in that establishment have been highly satisfactory. All the inmates, with the exception of the extremely old and infirm, take it weekly with benefit, and in no instance has its use been attended with injurious consequences. The bath, as usually constructed, comprises three compartments, the outer room, of the temperature of the external air, the middle room, heated from 100° to 110°, and the inner from

from 120° to 140°. In Lismore, there are but two apartments, one of the temperature of the outer air, or rather a few degrees above it, from its proximity to the hot air room; the hot room averages about 120 degrees, and appears to work satisfactorily at that temperature. The whole has been got up at a cost not exceeding 50 £.

1st July 1863.—The Turkish bath has been in almost daily use for the last fortnight, and I am happy to state that its use has been attended with marked benefit in several cases of chronic rheumatism and skin diseases; a great many of the able-bodied of both sexes have also availed themselves of it.

22nd July 1863.—I am happy to be again able to report favourably of the Turkish bath as a remedial agent. The beneficial results attending its use have in several instances exceeded my most sanguine expectations; it has been employed as yet chiefly in the treatment of rheumatism (acute and chronic), scrofula, and cutaneous diseases; all of which, I need scarcely say, form a large proportion of the diseases usually met with in workhouses. In every instance (even in the most obstinate chronic cases) it has given decided relief; in a great many it has effected a rapid cure. In one case of anæmia from renal disease, it has been completely successful. A more extensive trial will, I am confident, confirm my opinion of its utility in many more diseases in which I have not as yet had the opportunity to judge of its effects. I may safely assert, from my present experience, that its introduction will be found economical as well as useful, from the circumstance that its employment has in numerous instances greatly shortened the duration of disease requiring hospital treatment. I can speak highly of it as conducing to the general health of the inmates, all of whom, with the exception of the very old and infirm, take it weekly.

MIDDLETON UNION.

REPORT from the MEDICAL OFFICER; Week ending 13th April 1870.

SIXTY-THREE cases in General Hospital and five in Fever Hospital. House generally healthy, well ventilated, and free from any epidemic. Provisions of good quality and regularly supplied.

I beg to report that the Turkish bath of the Middleton Union Workhouse has been in active operation for the last six years, a period sufficiently long to form a somewhat correct estimate of its merits. It is in almost daily use, and is pretty generally availed of by almost all classes of the inmates, of almost all ages; and although the establishment is particularly well provided with excellent and suitable lavatories for almost all classes, still we find that the Turkish bath, although in no wise superseding them, takes its proper place as a very valuable addition, applicable in many cases in which they are not, whilst it may be stated with confidence that by no other known mode of lavement can the same absolute cleanliness be insured, whilst its value as a means of drying the clothes (and thus affording all times an ample supply of thoroughly aired clothing at an expense not exceeding that hitherto expended on fuel for a similar purpose, which answered the purpose comparatively very inefficiently) can scarcely be over-estimated, a statement in which I am fully borne out by the master and matron, who entirely coincide in my views on this part of the subject. The schoolmaster and schoolmistress also bear their ready testimony not only to the enjoyment, but beneficial effects derived from the occasional use by the school children under their charge. In fact, both young and old seem to derive both considerable enjoyment and considerable benefit from the occasional judicious use of this invigorating luxury. As regards my hospital patients, the class of cases in which I have found it most useful, were the various forms of scrofula, rheumatism, anæmia, and paralysis, in which two latter complaints, when not dependent on any organic lesion, we have occasionally obtained beneficial results; but especially in cutaneous affections of almost all forms in which its steady use has been almost uniformly crowned by a beneficial result, and with this exception, my experience does not lead me to regard it as a mode of cure (unassisted by other means) in, perhaps, any other form of disease. I am sure it would prove a valuable auxiliary in the reduction of dislocations, and also in the taxis for the reduction of strangulated hernia, and in some cases of retention of urine; but I cannot speak from experience. In fine, as in my opinion the judicious use of the Turkish bath unquestionably tends to conduce towards and promote the general healthy tone of the establishment, I cannot refrain from expressing my opinion that neither this or any other public institution can be properly mindful of the health of its inmates, or in a word, at all complete, without being provided with this very valuable addition to its other hygienic appliances.

(signed) Benjamin Johnston.

Poor Law Commission Office,
Dublin, 26 April 1870.

B. BOWLS, Chief Clerk.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS
(CONT. AN. CCXXVIII).

REPORT of the Lunatic Asylum and Workhouse
in the Prison of Cork and Anarchy, in which
Various Letters have been received, stating to what
extent such Asylums are now in use, and, Copy of
the Account made by the Managers, Officers of
these Institutions, respecting the Death, or others
who depart from the use of such Asylums.

(Mr. Philson)

Printed by the Press of Messrs. W. & A. Gifford,
11, July 1846.
